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ABSTRACT

This issue of Reports Magazine focuses on the challenges that women face and their efforts to continue the struggle for a wider recognition in development and all other spheres of life. "Feminist Issues in Development" (Peggy Antrobus) discusses how feminist analyses offer critiques of conventional approaches to development that highlight the structures and systems that oppress all people, especially poor women. The individual struggle is captured in "Nancy's Story" (Nancy Robinson), which describes a woman's awakening to her own strengths and her life's new sense of purpose in Appalachia. "Superwoman in the Third World" (Elayne Clift, Merle Goldberg) is a brief comment on the burden that development has put on women. Based on anthropological research carried out over two years in Kenya, "Buying Power?" (Martin Walsh), an analysis of women's groups, shows how women's views of their situation can be very different from that of development planners. A report focuses on how prostitution in the Philippines is tied to global militarization and national debt. Three books are reviewed: "Doing a Feasibility Study," "Rural Women and State Policy: Feminist Perspectives on Latin American Development," and "Hopeful Openings." In a field report, Jaya Gajanayake describes how village women in Sri Lanka learned to trust their own judgment and work together to overcome traditional barriers to change. (YLB)

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World Education Editorial

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Editors:
David Eddy
Gill Garb

Design/Layout:
The Laughing Bear Associates
Montpelier, Vermont

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The status of women did not undergo revolutionary change from 1975 to 1985, the years of the United Nations Decade for the Advancement of Women. However, two years after the meeting in Nairobi that marked the end of the Decade, it is obvious that the precedent for that change has been established. The final meeting was the precipitate of years of smaller meetings. For women throughout the world, it affirmed that the struggles of individual women and their communities, their small successes and their larger problems, were not isolated, but part of a broader, global struggle. Women came together not only from New York and Geneva, but from Dungannon, a small town in rural Virginia, from Olongapo in the Philippines and from Boinani on the coast of Kenya. Through an exchange of information and ideas, women shared the many facets of the challenges they faced and reinforced their efforts to continue to struggle for wider recognition in all spheres of life.

In almost every society, women are the most oppressed, their work is the least recognized and when recognized, the least valued. The generations of silence and invisibility of poor women lends special weight to their stories when they are heard. This individual struggle is captured in *Nancy's Story*, which describes Nancy Robinson's awakening to her own strengths and her life's new sense of purpose in Appalachia. Jaya Gajanayake describes how village women in Sri Lanka learned to trust their own judgement and work together to overcome traditional barriers to change. Based on anthropological research carried out over two years in Kenya, Martin Walsh's analysis of women's groups shows how women's views of their situation can be very different from that of development planners.

These perspectives help illuminate not only the unique experience of the individual or group, but the structures that perpetuate cultural, social, economic and political inequality. We see in this issue, for example, how prostitution in the Philippines is tied to global militarization and national debt. In her review of *Rural Women and State Policy*, Elizabeth Dore highlights the ways in which the economic crisis in Latin America has had a marked impact on the subordination of the rural poor, especially women.

The need to address these larger, structural issues is the main argument of Peggy Antrobus' article, *Feminist Issues in Development*. She views what were formerly perceived as "women's issues" to be an integral part of the larger economic, social and political equations that affect all people. She relates her growing awareness of feminism over the course of the Decade to a recognition that only far-reaching changes in governments' social and economic policies will bring about a more equitable restructuring of societies around the world.

For those of us working in development and education, the end of the Decade means an end to the privilege of our isolation. We can no longer view our projects or classrooms as separate from the wider systems and structures that contain them. As we move from "women's issues" to "human issues", we must dare to ask the more difficult and dangerous questions of structural change. We hope that the articles in this issue both help define what those questions are and point us towards some of the answers.

The Editors

• Reports

Number 27; Fall 1987

Contents

Editorial		2
Feminist Issues in Development	<i>Peggy Antrobus discusses how feminist analyses offer critiques of conventional approaches to development that highlight the structures and systems that oppress all people, especially poor women.</i>	5
Nancy's Story	<i>Nancy Robinson tells about her life growing up in southern Appalachia and describes the changes that took her from factory worker to director of the Dungannon Development Commission, a community organization in Scott County, Virginia.</i>	9
Centerpiece	<i>Superwoman in the Third World</i>	13
Buying Power?	<i>Proponents of income generation as a development strategy for women tend to overlook the effect relationships within the household have on women's economic status. Martin Walsh looks at households and women's enterprises on the coast of Kenya.</i>	14
Reports On:	<i>Prostitution in the Philippines</i>	17
Book Reports	<i>Doing a Feasibility Study, reviewed by Candace Nelson Rural Women and State Policy, reviewed by Elizabeth Dore Hopeful Openings, reviewed by Kathy McAfee</i>	21
From the Field	<i>Jaya Gajanayake writes from Sri Lanka.</i>	23



Feminist Issues In Development

*Feminist critiques
of development
illuminate the larger
structures that
oppress both women
and men*

by Peggy Antrobus

For women throughout the world, the United Nations Decade for the Advancement of Women was a journey of self-discovery and a time for breaking silences and forging new strengths. For most, this experience led not simply to the pursuit of goals for personal advancement, but to a new commitment to struggle for the ending of oppression, injustice and violence of all kinds and at all levels: in our homes, in our places of work, in our communities and countries, and in our world.

The achievements of the Decade are not to be found in an overall improvement in the role and status of women. The economic crises of the late seventies, still continuing today, ensured that at a global level women were actually worse off in 1985 than they had been in 1975. If the Decade leaves any legacy, it is in a deeper understanding of the issues and in the emergence of new networks with the experience and commitment to continue to work for changes that will humanize our world.

My own work began in the Caribbean with an uncritical acceptance of the existing social and economic structures of our societies, structures formed by colonialism and maintained in the post-

independence era. By helping women to become more self-reliant, I, in turn, realized the necessity of challenging these structures. Our programs at the Women and Development Unit of the University of the West Indies intended, more than anything else, to empower women by fostering the skills, confidence, awareness and access to resources required to move beyond the barriers confronting them.

On the surface, my journey during the Decade took place within the context of programs for the 'Integration of Women in Development'; yet, the most transforming and empowering aspect of this journey was my increasing feminist consciousness. Originally, I, like many others, did not name this journey 'feminist'. However, from being apologetic of the label 'feminist', I have become convinced of the need to use the word as often as possible — always defining it as a consciousness of *all* the forms of women's oppression and a commitment to work against them. Such a definition allows for the inclusion of men, and, sadly, the self-exclusion of some women.

Because feminism takes us inevitably to a struggle against individuals and institutions, structures and systems, that

oppress others as well as ourselves, it is the most important and powerful hope for transforming our world today. The feminist critique of conventional models of development has provided me with new and important insights into various approaches to development, from the growth-oriented models of the first Development Decade, to the basic needs, child survival, and the "project" approaches of the ensuing decades.

In preparation for the international meeting marking the end of the Decade for Women, a group of third world feminists prepared a document that explored these issues. Out of this initial effort in 1984 grew the network Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and the book *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions*². In the book, authors Gita Sen and Caren Grown point out a number of limitations of conventional theories of development. Among these they note that current approaches rarely acknowledge the existence of gender hierarchies in the home, and they fail to take into consideration the effect of gender relationships on women's access to resources and influence. (See "Buying Power?", this issue.) Furthermore, women's work in the home and in the 'informal' sectors of the economies is not valued or included in national income statistics, and, there is no recognition of the link between women's productive work in the labor force and their reproductive tasks in the home.

Sen and Grown also discuss the impact on women of the global crises of debt, food security and environmental degradation, the rise of fundamentalism, and increasing militarization and nuclear threat. Their analysis reveals how these crises are not aberrations, but manifestations of the web of economic, social, cultural, and political forces that perpetuate oppression. Feminist critiques such as these have fundamental implications for policy — if policy-makers can only be persuaded to overlook deep-seated fears and prejudices against women.

Feminist Critiques

*For women to become a vital force in their societies, change will have to be based on a new theory of development which embraces feminism... Unless there is a better understanding of how patriarchy and economic systems propagate oppression, no effective or inclusive work on bringing about a new order can be done.*³

Feminist scholarship has suggested that a failure to take gender differences into account in the various approaches to development has served to conceal

important elements in the structures which perpetuate "underdevelopment". Feminism recognizes that the issue of women's role in development is, more than anything else, an issue of the uneven distribution of power between men and women and the marginalization of those activities in which women predominate. As an example, I would like to offer critiques of some common approaches to rural development. Feminists have highlighted certain limitations specific to the condition of women in each of the three approaches I discuss below — the production-oriented approach, the basic needs approach, and project-based rural development.

Production-oriented Approach

The centerpiece of this approach to rural development is the delivery of modern and more effective packages of inputs and services related to agriculture. Common critiques of this "growth-oriented" approach point out its failure to take into account the political economy of rural and agricultural development, including such factors as land distribution, the power of local elites, and the inadequacies of top-down management practices. There is also a fatal tendency to disregard the prevailing system of agricultural production and the stock of empirical knowledge in rural areas along with a failure to take into account the sexual politics of development.

If we examine this approach from the perspective of poor women, we gain an even better understanding of its limitations. Women's access to land, credit, training and new or modern technologies is severely constrained by a combination of social, cultural, political and economic factors. The sexual division of labor has given women primary, and often exclusive, responsibility for the tasks of household maintenance (women's reproductive role). In rural areas where there are none of the modern amenities that ease the burden of these tasks for many (though by no means all!) urban women, household maintenance is a full-time occupation, which involves:

- walking long distances to collect water and fuel;
- growing and processing many of the foods before they can be eaten;
- caring for all members of the household, including men, elderly members and children (without the help of many of the social services that we take for granted, including hospitals, clinics, schools and day care centers).

Many rural women must also balance demands with productive activities.

The problems encountered by rural women, as they respond to the demands of their reproductive roles, make it difficult for them to participate fully in important training activities. In addition, cultural norms and traditional attitudes sometimes prevent or inhibit access to extension services, land, credit and other important resources. Surveys undertaken in a variety of countries, including the Caribbean, show that male agricultural extension officers tend to concentrate their attention on male farmers.

The existence of gender-hierarchies in the home and in the community further limit women's access to resources. Women often have to obtain their male partners' permission to participate in activities which may be of vital importance for their productivity.

Irene Tinker⁴ cogently describes the ways in which a growth-oriented approach jeopardizes women's position. When the best, most accessible lands are appropriated for cash crops, women are deprived of land for growing food and collecting fuel. This means longer hours of work; loss of control over family income; diminished returns on their labor in food production; as well as a fall in family nutrition. Sexual inequalities in skills and income result from the concentration of training on and the transfer of technologies to male farmers. The inequality further exacerbates the marginalization of women's domains (reproduction) that is common in a modern, commercialized, productive sector.

Basic Needs Approach

The glaring deficiencies and adverse social consequences of production-oriented approaches to development have led to approaches that focus on ensuring the basic needs of the poor. In other words, distributive measures are used to compensate for the failure of wealth to "trickle down" to the poor.

This approach, first proposed by the International Labor Organization (ILO), aims to cover a family's minimum nutritional, housing and clothing requirements by providing access to vital services such as water, sanitation, transport, health, and education; and an adequately remunerated job for every person capable and willing to work. Finally, the approach intends to foster people's participation in the decision-making processes that concern their lives, their means of subsistence, and their personal liberty. However, the

results have been both disappointing and expensive to administer.

As with production-oriented approaches, the failure to "see" the female face of the rural poor is a major limitation of the basic needs approach. Though attempts have been made to secure "participation in the decision-making processes...", all too often it is the men who participate. Women's invisibility leads to a failure to take their needs, concerns and perspectives into account. When these strategies do focus on women, they tend to treat them as passive "recipients" or "target groups" for benefits, rather than as adults with their own strengths, wisdom, and capacity to manage their own affairs.

UNICEF's Child Survival strategies are an example. These tend to treat women as "instrumental" to the reduction of malnutrition and infant mortality but do not demonstrate particular concern for the women in their own right. My own participation in applied nutrition programs in the 1960s has enabled me to see the difference between working with women as mothers and working with them as mature adults with varied and complex needs and concerns, which is the difference between "doing for women" and empowering women to act on their own behalf.

Despite "the mounting evidence that women, as the main providers of basic needs, are crucial to understanding and to resolving the crisis of rural reproduction in the third world," governments, international agencies, researchers and planners continue to ignore women's issues as irrelevant to their policies. And yet, the empowerment of women through their organizations is key to the potential betterment of *all* the poor.

The marked resistance to focusing on gender, especially in rural development programs, where women's role is recognized as crucial, makes one wonder whether it may not be true that some men fear the growth of women's power through collective organization and decision making and would rather see programs fail than provide the necessary support and recognition of their efforts and initiatives.

Project-based Approaches

The focus on "projects" in development assistance programs gives an entirely false view of development; the impression is often created that if not for the project there would be no development.⁶ This approach overlooks the fact that development is an on-going process through which people are constantly engaged in trying to make a better life for



Basic needs approaches tend to treat women as instrumental to the achievement of goals, such as the reduction of malnutrition or infant mortality, that are often established without taking the perspective of women or their needs into account.

themselves and their families. Moreover, the concentration on separate projects can lead to an *ad hoc* approach to development — a series of disconnected, discontinuous activities, that too often come to an end when the external funding is exhausted.

Throughout the Decade, the emphasis on small-scale women's projects has appeared to parallel the marginalization of women in the main-stream of the economy. The most obvious instance is the often enthusiastic and universal support for income generating projects in preference to programs that attempt to address structural issues or empower women. This narrow approach to income-generating projects is even more obvious when evaluations attempt to apply cost-benefit analysis to the outcomes. In my own experience, it is unrealistic to expect small-scale economic projects to provide an adequate livelihood for women and their families. These projects should be seen for what they are: a way of providing poor



women with welfare. For this reason, at least, the scope of these projects should be broadened (not narrowed, as some evaluations suggest) to include educational, organizational and consciousness-raising components, so that at least they set the participants on a path toward personal growth and greater self-reliance.

Finally, a project approach overlooks the importance of long-term institution-building. My own experience in fund raising is that many agencies prefer funding *projects* rather than *programs*. And there is an even greater resistance to funding for institution-building, especially when the payment of local salaries is at issue. However, these same agencies are willing to find funds for substantial fees for consultants, especially when these are nationals of the donor countries. Within the framework of the Decade, this kind of assistance has been counter-productive¹ leading to dependence and even, worse, to the undermining of confidence in local expertise.

Project approaches favor short-term strategies, such as income generation, rather than laying the foundation for more long lasting change.

Humanizing Development

Development planning will be enormously enhanced once gender differences are taken into account and recognition given to the fact that people, especially poor women, are capable of promoting their own development. The first step must be to build an infrastructure to provide a context in which women can feel some sense of control over their lives.

We have emerged from this Decade at a very special time in the history of this planet. The global economy is still in crisis and will be until there is agreement about the need for a new international economic order; militarization and nuclear expansion have reached proportions that defy imagination. People throughout the world, especially in the third world, have begun to question the old assumptions about growth, development, and security.

In any real movement toward change, we need to understand the limitations of short-term strategies to alleviate distress. To improve women's situation, we must also recognize the need for long-term strategies that challenge existing structures and make governments accountable for their decisions to the people they serve. Above all, we must recognize that women's voices must enter the definition of development and the making of policy choices.

1. For third world women especially, the term "feminism" is alienating because it is not our own, and also because it has been distorted by a patriarchal media intent on trivializing and discrediting anything that empowers women. But the elements of a consciousness of our own oppression as women, combined with a commitment to struggle against that oppression, is the essence of feminism.

2. *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions* by Gita Sen and Caren Grown is available from Monthly Review Press, 155 West 23rd Street, New York NY 10011. (US\$7.50)

3. Anita Anand in *Women in Development: A Resource Guide for Organizations and Action* 1984, p. 10. (see back page for information)

4. Tinker, I. "Feminizing Development — For Growth with Equity," CARE Briefs, No. 6

5. Sen and Grown, p. 58.

6. See *Aid for Just Development: A Report on the Future of Foreign Assistance*, a forthcoming (Spring 1988) publication of The Development Group for Alternative Policies, 1010 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 521, Washington DC 20005.

Peggy Antrobus was born in Granada, educated in St. Lucia and St. Vincent, and has worked in St. Vincent, Jamaica, and Barbados. She was founder and director of the Jamaica Women's Bureau from 1974-77, and in 1978, established the Women and Development Unit (WAND) within the University of the West Indies. She is one of the founding committee members of the DAWN network.



Nancy's Story

Nancy Robinson is the Director of the Dungannon Development Commission, a community organization in Scott County, Virginia (see box). Her story, which appears below, is excerpted from *Picking up the Pieces*, a book that emerged from a workshop held at the Highlander Center in New Market, Tennessee three years ago. During the workshop, thirty women from ten different communities throughout the South shared their stories and those of their mothers and grandmothers in order to understand how "women's work" has changed over the generations and to

illuminate the connections between their individual paths. All of the women were leaders in their communities, and they hoped that by telling about their own lives, other women would be encouraged to recognize the importance of their past and, as stated in the preface, "work to change the dominant patterns of economic life" for themselves and their daughters. Their efforts prove that the boundaries between the first and third world are not geographical.

The Editors.

*"A Susie
Homemaker,
I am not!"*

by Nancy Robinson

When Mom and Dad got married they lived where we live now, in Scott County, Dugannon, Virginia; and I am the second of six children. My oldest sister got killed, so now that makes me the oldest. We were very poor. My mother was living with my grandmother for a while. My grandmother was getting older and it was more nerve racking. So she put us in a little two room shack on an acre down below and eight of us lived in that little two room shack; and started going to school and Mother would take in ironing for people to have a little money. She would sew in the home to have a little extra income coming in. We all had to share the chores. She would keep me home one day a week to wash and we finally got a wringer washer. On Monday, I would always have to stay home and help her with the wash because we had to carry water, we didn't have plumbing or anything like that.

I was getting ready to go into my senior year and she was telling me I would have to quit. She said, "You are going to have to quit school." And I thought, "Oh, no!" I only lacked one year of getting my diploma. "Or," she says, "I have this lady friend of mine that has a friend that lives in Knoxville that needs a live-in person, to take care of her kids and do all of their housework." And she said, "She would let you go to school, to finish your last year."

So I went with this lady. She was a wealthy person. She had money. She started out paying me \$12 a week and that was my little spending money. I had no freedom; but I did get my education. She taught me a lot. She had a child while I was living with her and she moved that child in on me. I mean I had to get up at night and take care of the baby and still go to school. It was really hard. She had three other children besides the baby. And she was the type of person that made you a list out. You do this Monday, this Tuesday, this Wednesday, this Thursday, this Friday — plus all the extra babysitting. However, I did graduate.

This was my way out

After I graduated from high school I went into nursing school. When I was going to nursing school, I met my (future) ex-mother-in-law and she was in the class also. She went around telling everybody that I was her future daughter-in-law. I didn't know her son at all, he was in the Air Force. Anyway, she said, "He'll be in and I want to introduce you."

Two weeks later we got married. I knew him two weeks. This was my out. I didn't want to get married, but I thought, "Gee-Whiz, this was my out."

Well, that didn't work out. But I had two babies right together. He wouldn't work, and he started abusing my children. I was working two jobs. I was working third shift and then going straight across the street from the other one working first shift. He was supposed to have been taking care of the kids. I came home a couple of times, like three or four in the afternoon and I would hear my daughter, she was only nine months old; she would be crying and everything. I would go up and she would have blue marks on her, and she hadn't been fed. We got divorced and I had to move to Ohio and live with my mother.

Is this women's lib or what?

The first job I had was working in a factory with a drill press which was very boring. I had been there seven years or something. I would see these men sitting at these automatic punch presses, just sit back and push a button and the little thing just fall through, you know, no

manual hard labor and they was getting ten cents more on the hour for doing this. Well, I had made a remark to some of the men folk that I would like to run that machine. So, it just so happened that one day they needed this job run really bad; so they asked me, "Nancy, would you come over here and run this?" And they showed me — it was nothing — all you did was push a button and set there and watch. The box filled up, you moved the box and put another box under it. And I was getting ten cents more on it.

It was a union shop, so I went and put my bid up because this opening came in for the Double A-(automatic punch press) operator. Well, naturally, no woman had ever done that. Women just didn't do things like that. The president of the company called me in his office, here he is with his big fat cigar stuck out of his mouth, you know and he was rared back in his big easy chair and he says, "Nancy, I want to know what this is. Is this women's lib or what?" And I never will forget that. I had been out in the factory long enough that I pretty well knew I was kind of gutsy. I got my self confidence back and all that and I said, "Well, I figure if I'm good enough to fill in when some of these men miss work, that I'm good enough to have this job permanently." "HUMPH." You know. He



Nancy Robinson, Director of the Dugannon Development Commission, continues to help her community move in new directions.

never had a woman to speak to him that way. He says, "I'll try you, but there's not going to be any men helping you do a thing." And he said, "I'm gonna be awatching you." In the meantime that cigar rolled around — and I never will forget that.

Well, I opened the door for the other women. I was one of the best operators with the punch press and the dies. If you break them, it is thousands of dollars to get them repaired. Well, I went on like that for a year or two and I got bored. So, I thought, well, they have a tool and die making shop, you know where they repaired the dies and all that. And I said, "That's what I want to be." You know, a tool and die maker. And so I went in and saw Mr. Hackingberg and he said, "Oh, Lord, here you are again, Nancy." You know, just like that. But he knew I could do it. The company paid for me to go to night school to become a tool and die maker.

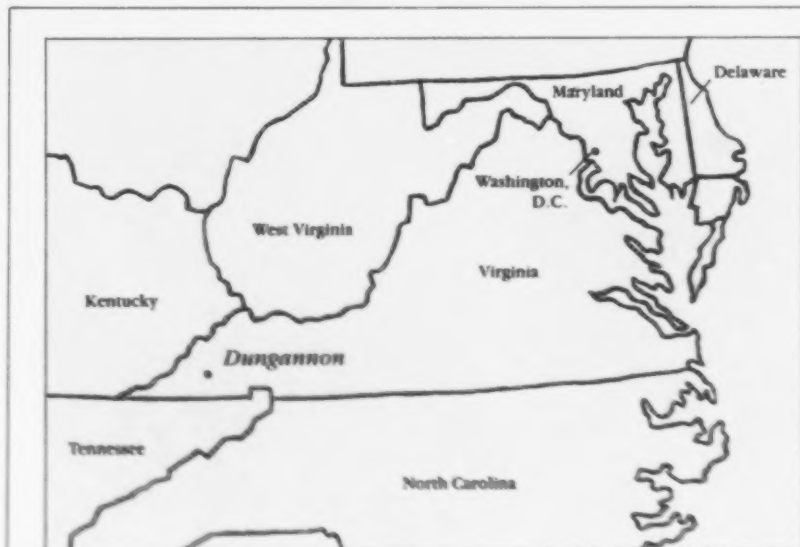
Well, I was in the process of going to night school and I had gotten several certificates, but I really hadn't completed the course. When there was an opening at the Caterpillar tractor company, I thought, "Oh, boy! Oh, boy!" Big time. It lasted three years. I got a job there at the Caterpillar tractor company and I had the best of benefits, you know, I was keeping up with the Joneses, I was really flying high; I had bought myself a home and bought my car, all on my own. I had worked so hard. Until I got laid off from Caterpillar.

I gotta go back

And then I couldn't make my mortgage payment, couldn't make my car payment; and pretty soon my unemployment ran out and I still had three children at home. And I thought, "What am I going to do?" I sure didn't want to go back to where I came from. There was nothing there. That's why I left to start with, you know, because there wasn't nothing at home.

Anyways, I thought, "Gosh, I gotta go back to Scott County, Dungannon, Ooooooh." You know, Nancy was used to this fast lane, conveniences, everything. But I had to — I had no choice. Mother kept saying, "Well you come on down here. We've got the Development Commission now and they're doing this and they're doing that" — my dad and she were board members on the DDC. I didn't have any choice but to go, because I lost my home, everything that I worked for in the 20 years, I lost completely. And I had to start over from scratch again, you know. I thought, "I'll do it."

I had three thousand dollars coming back on my tax return. And I thought,



Dungannon Development Commission

The Dungannon Development Commission (DDC) works to develop economic opportunities, housing, education and programs to meet the needs of the small rural community of Dungannon in Scott County, Virginia. They helped a group of women start a sewing co-op, and they are working to develop housing and a community-owned sewing factory (Phoenix Industries) to replace a burned-out commercial factory. The DDC has helped the town secure water and sewage facilities, develop a summer recreation program, and organize community celebrations. At a community center called the Depot, DDC developed and coordinates a community-based education program that provides educational opportunities from basic literacy through two-year college programs. The education program is closely tied to community needs and development. Ninety-eight percent of the students are women and the main leaders of the organization are women.

"I'm going to buy me a trailer." I thought me a trailer, about three thousand dollars. And I was without electricity for almost a year, no water, nothing; and I was just struggling. I was carrying water. Here I am back like I was when I was growing up, doing the same thing again.

It is fulfilling to me

I had never been in community work, never. I didn't even know what a proposal was. That's true. But I got bored and the first thing you know, I started volunteering — volunteering to help the women's club that has the Depot, volunteering work for the Development Commission. Volunteering — I didn't care what it was, I would volunteer for it, just to keep busy. Meantime, I did housework to give myself a little income. I went around cleaning people's houses there in that area and I was in great demand. And let me tell you, a Susie Homemaker I am not. I never have been a Susie Homemaker. I know how to cook and clean and wash and all that, but give me something else outside of the home. That's not my bag.

So that's how I became involved. The first thing, you know, they made me

president of the Development Commission. And then a member of the board, Anne Leibig, started training me. She worked with me with proposals and she encouraged me. She says, "Nancy, you can do this. You are the type of person this community needs." And she just kept encouraging me and made me real confident about myself. I went back to the college program we have. I had worked all this time in the factory. And I was never happy. You just hated getting up and going to work in the morning. Here I was making this \$412 a week. I don't make that now a month, but I work harder now. But that's because I believe in what I'm doing. And it is fulfilling to me. I should have been doing this years ago instead of wasting my time in the factories. But I didn't know. It's just something that kind of fell into place and I work harder on this for a lot less pay, but I enjoy it so much. And it is really making a difference in our community. I have learned to be very independent. I am very strong indeed now. I was always a bashful type person before, you know, shy and never did public speaking. Now I don't know when to shut up.

Picking up the Pieces is available from Highlander Research and Education Center, Route 3, Box 370, New Market TN 37820 USA. (US\$45)



Superwoman in the Third World

Centerpiece

Text by
Elayne Clift and Merle Goldberg;
illustration by
Sarah Lee Terrat

*Development
adds yet
another burden*

Owing to the crucial role women play in both production and reproduction, development planners have long focused on women primarily as childbearers and homemakers, rather than as individuals with their own needs, problems and responsibilities. Disregarded as human beings in their own right, women have become the vehicle for development agencies to try to achieve a project's broader end. Perceived in this way, as "target groups" to realize a larger goal, women themselves are rarely "targeted" for change or assistance. As a result, many ambitious development programs fail to meet their objectives. Child survival projects billed to save the lives of millions of children, for example, can only be effective with the active participation of women. However, if a woman's health is poor, it is unlikely she will be able to raise healthy children. Agricultural programs consistently target cash crops to promote agricultural production while neglecting staple crops traditionally raised by women. Therefore, women's traditional agricultural tasks — as well as family nutritional needs — remain seriously neglected.

Similarly, when designing programs and scheduling development activities, planners frequently disregard the

demands and inflexibility of women's existing responsibilities. The timing of classes in literacy, nutrition or health too often assumes that women are dependent housewives with spare time. Most rural women work between 10 and 12 hours a day and can seldom set aside family survival tasks (collecting wood, fetching water, preparing meals, weeding fields, minding children) to participate in classes, clinic visits and demonstrations, however helpful these might be to them in the longer run.

The first step in designing successful programs is for planners to recognize the realities of poor women's lives and to focus on women themselves, on their basic needs, their health, their ongoing responsibilities. Women need to be consulted when programs are being designed and need to participate much more actively in planning their own development. As wives, mothers and providers women's voices need to be heard if programs that depend on their participation are to succeed in any real way.

Elayne Clift and Merle Goldberg work for the HealthCom project, which focuses on communication for child survival and is carried out for USAID by the Academy for Educational Development.

Buying Power?

Some Outcomes of Income for Women

by Martin Walsh

Proponents of income generation as a development strategy for women tend to overlook the effect relationships within the household have on women's economic status. It is commonly assumed that a woman's possession of extra income will automatically foster her independence and bring her and her household greater economic power and a better standard of living. However, a close look at households on the coast of Kenya reveals that women's ability to control their income is not so much a consequence of having earned it in the first place, as an indication of the overall pattern of relationships, needs, and resources within their households.

Jumwa's Household

The life of Jumwa, a Giriama widow in eastern Kenya, illustrates some important features of the economic position of peasant women. As is customary practice among the Giriama, the elder brother of Jumwa's husband inherited Jumwa and her children when her husband died. Her new husband refused to pay the school fees for Jumwa's only son, insisting that he work at home like his sisters. After struggling for four years to keep her son in school on her own, Jumwa moved with him to a distant village where one of her daughters had married. With the help of her daughter and son-in-law, she began growing and selling cotton. After every harvest, however, her husband came to claim her income and take away any saleable possessions she might have. Jumwa then turned to brewing and selling beer, a source of income that she could keep more effectively from her husband. Helped by the proceeds from the beer, her son completed primary and secondary education, went on to train as a

teacher, and eventually became the headmaster of a local primary school. Jumwa now lives with her son and is largely supported by him and his family.

This brief account points to some of the ways in which a woman's economic status alters as household composition and relationships change over time. Furthermore, where the prevailing code of gender relationships stipulates that a wife must leave decisions about income to her husband, the correlation between a woman's possession of extra income and her increased economic power and independence does not necessarily hold. This correlation, however, underlies many schemes to raise women's income. A further anecdote from Jumwa's life shows how relationships within the household determine the impact of income generation activities.

From the Household to the Group

Jumwa's long struggle to educate her son earned her considerable respect in Bomani, her adopted village. So, when adult literacy classes were planned, Jumwa was chosen to rally support among local women. Within a short time, the class she helped establish evolved into an organized women's group, with Jumwa as its chairwoman. After experimenting with a variety of activities, including the production and sale of copper necklaces, the group settled on a bakery as its main income generation project (see *Reports* no. 22, July 1980, pp.3-4). From the outset, Jumwa was aware of the difficulty that married members would have in retaining the income from the group's activities, so she encouraged members to invest their proceeds from sales in livestock. After first showing the money to her husband,

an individual member could then deposit it with Jumwa, who kept it until enough had accumulated to buy a goat. This policy had some successes, and when the group later divided bakery profits, a number of women invested in cattle. There was, however, no guarantee that married women would retain control over their investments in stock. The husband of one member, Rose, made no distinction between her goats and his own in their herd when he chose animals for slaughter. Rose had no expectation that he would distinguish between goats and saw his management of the herd as normal.

The issue of control over income has a demonstrable effect upon participation in income generation activities. In Bomani, group members' baked and sold loaves not only for the group, but for individual profit as well. The unemployed husband of one member took her out of the group because she refused to give him the money she had earned from her own sales. Another member stopped baking for herself and only baked for the group because her husband took most of the money she made. Her junior co-wife, however, persuaded the same husband to let her retain a share of her income, and she continued to bake both

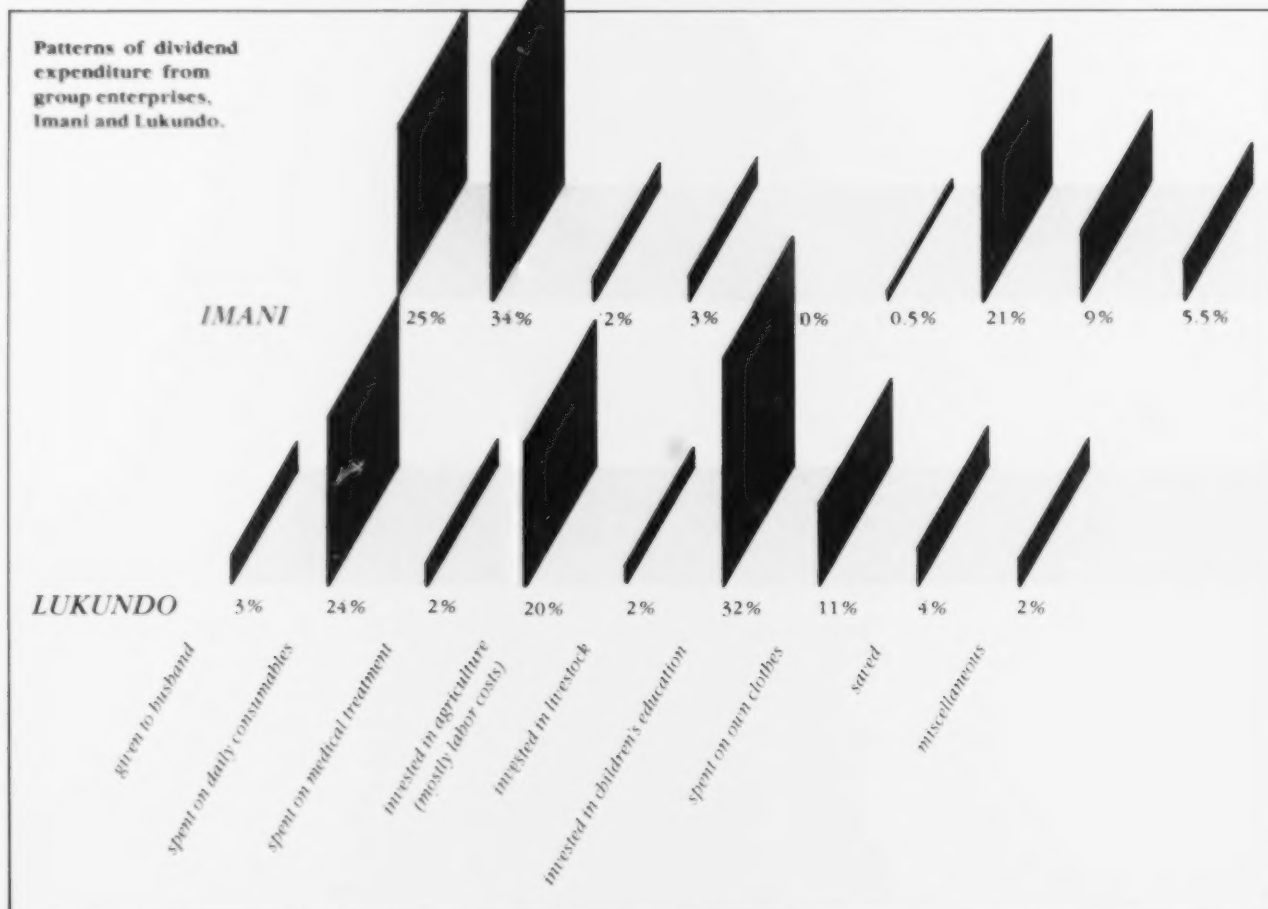
for herself and the group. The last case shows that negotiation over income is possible for some women, but the negotiation occurs within the context of the relationships, resources and needs of the household. Seen in this light, a husband controls not only household assets like income, but less obvious ones, such as membership in the group itself, which he can renew, withdraw, or give to another female family member.

From Household to Household

Households vary, both from one another, as well as at different stages of their development. Rose is one of the most active and enterprising members of the Bomani group and has a number of sources of income apart from the proceeds from her baking. Some years ago, with the consent of her husband, she bought two fields of cashewnut trees. The income from these trees, as well as

from others that she had planted herself, accrued to her husband. Two years ago, however, he decided that she could keep the money herself. He wanted to simplify his management of the household: instead of taking the money from his wife and then giving most of it back for various household expenses, it made sense to let her do the budgeting herself. Employed on and off as a mason, owning a herd of cattle, and managing an agricultural enterprise, Rose's husband had enough income to feel comfortable in relinquishing some of his control. This was not so much a direct consequence of his wife's earning power as the outcome of a more general understanding between them at a time when there was comparatively little economic pressure upon the household. Resident heads of less fortunate households are not as likely to institute such a change.

Among the Giriama and their Mijikenda neighbors, household heads have extensive rights over the labor and income of other household members. However, how they choose to exercise these rights may vary. The fact that married women may engage in collective enterprises outside of the household does not alter these rights; if anything, it reinforces them. The logic behind this is



very simple. Women's membership in groups is conditional upon their husbands' agreement. Permission is given, in effect, to withdraw resources (in the form of labor and cash) from the household. This withdrawal is allowed in expectation of some future deposit; hence, husbands' claim upon their wives' income from group enterprises.

A husband's prerogative does not imply that he necessarily forces his wife to render him her income. Women are partners (though not equal partners) in an arrangement ideally designed to benefit the household and ensure its successful reproduction over time. Conflicts are most likely to arise when women perceive that the arrangement is not beneficial to the household, and it is when conflicts arise that men will actively assert their power.

Information on women's use of dividends from the group enterprises of two groups, Imani and Lukundo, show two different patterns of expenditures. (See accompanying pie charts.)

Although both enterprises are located in the same province, the women who operate them belong to two different ethnic groups. The cultural differences between the two largely account for the varying pattern of expenditures shown in the charts, which illustrates the difficulty of generalizing about income distribution from one village to the next. The members of the Imani women's group are mostly Giriama, and, as the example of Jumwa showed earlier and this data supports, Giriama husbands exert a strong claim on wives' income. However, it is the husbands' obligation to pay for children's

education and outside agricultural labor when necessary. The chart also shows that the women of Lukundo retain more of their income, while at the same time evidently paying for more of the other household costs.

For both groups of women, married or not, household needs are paramount. This includes the satisfaction of immediate household needs as well as investment in the future via the education of children (who may later, like Jumwa's son, provide important support). The difference lies in the domestic apportionment of responsibility for different needs. There is, of course, no guarantee that husbands will fulfill their share of these responsibilities, which is not solely a problem where wives are obliged to hand over income to their husbands. Even where women are allowed to retain their income, husbands can choose to spend their own earnings as they wish and not necessarily to benefit the household. The net effect in both cases is the same and serves as a reminder that women are invariably in the subordinate position. In and of itself, income will not buy women power. At best it will increase their ability to purchase goods and services and help secure a better future for the household as a productive unit.



Women's Group Enterprises: A Study of the Structure of Opportunity on the Kenya Coast

Five years ago, the Agency for International Development awarded World Education a grant to study how women's participation in income generation activities affected other parts of their lives. In collaboration with Tototo Home Industries, a Kenyan NGO that assists rural women's groups (see *Reports* No. 24, "Deciding for Themselves"), World Education conducted a baseline survey providing demographic profiles of members and non-members of Tototo-assisted groups in the Coast Province. With information from the survey, four groups in different villages were selected for in-depth case studies. World Education anthropologist Martin Walsh spent four to six weeks in each village reconstructing the history of each group, conducting extensive interviews with individual members, and collecting household data. The principal findings of the case studies, as discussed in the accompanying article, point to a complex set of factors that affect women's relation to income and underscore the absence of a linear relationship between women's income and their status.

The full report of the study, authored by Jeanne McCormack, Martin Walsh, and Candace Nelson, highlights questions that should be posed with respect to income generation projects for women throughout Africa and concludes with practical recommendations of interest to project planners. "Women's Group Enterprises: A Study of the Structure of Opportunity on the Kenya Coast" is available for US\$20.00 from World Education, 210 Lincoln Street, Boston, MA 02111, USA.

The Outcome of Income for Women

Family welfare, population, and small business specialists have promoted income generation programs for women as the panacea for the gender-related ills of the past three decades of development assistance. All too often, however, income generation enthusiasts are ill-informed about the context in which their programs operate. Income generation projects do not develop in a social and economic vacuum, and their effects cannot be readily predicted. Peasant women, members of women's groups included, are first and foremost members of households, which are productive units that differ considerably from one another and that have their own enterprises and structures of control and decision-making. Women's "possession" of income in this context can have very different consequences from those anticipated by project planners.

Martin Walsh, who holds a doctorate in social anthropology from the University of Cambridge, is currently working with Tototo Home Industries on a second phase of research (funded by the Ford Foundation and World Education) on women's groups and their income generation projects.

On... Reports



Prostitution in the Philippines

Mass Marketing the Oldest Profession

Prostitution is by no means a new way of making money in any country. But in the Philippines, two aspects in particular differentiate the present from the past. The first is its transnational character, bringing together men from the first world and women, as well as children, from the third world. (Here, the relationship serves as a metaphor for the broader economic dependencies of developing countries on industrialized nations.) Cheap sex, together with sun and sand, attract the foreign tourist, whose dollars and yen are needed to bolster a failing economy.

The second aspect concerns the way mainstream institutions have moved to control what once was a marginal activity, again as a result of the international economic equation. In the Philippines, where it is estimated that as many as three to five percent of Manila's women work as prostitutes, this has meant the creation of a "tourist-oriented program" during the 1970s that entailed changes in government policy, the creation of licensing bureaus, and the issuance of health certificates to hostesses and hospitality girls (euponyms for prostitutes). These measures helped

spawn a new sort of "package tour" that included sex as part of the planned activities for the Japanese, North American, and Western European men who signed up for these ventures.

For many of those working to help prostitutes in the Philippines, the aspects discussed above that created a transnational industry are inextricably linked with issues of national sovereignty and economic independence. For example, they point out that even before the advent of the tourist-oriented program, the services of Filipina hostesses were in particular demand at the two large US military installations hosted by the Philippines — Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base. Both have spawned small cities whose only indigenous industry is to provide entertainment for the thousands of servicemen who pass through the gates each day. Sister Soledad Perpinan, a Philippine Good Shepard nun who coordinates the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women (TW-MAE-W), claims, "The business side of sex around military bases served as a feasibility study for the tourist industry."

In order to understand how institutionalized prostitution evolved, a closer look at Subic and the surrounding community discloses both the economic and social structures that are used in other parts of the Philippines to support the tourist industry and also promote the sexual exploitation of women.

The Blueprint

Eighty miles north of Manila, the US naval base at Subic Bay is the home port of the largest navy in the Pacific — the US Seventh Fleet. The American portion of the base, which is leased from the Philippine Government, occupies 14,400 acres and employs more than 7,000 resident American civilian and military personnel. An average of ten ships are in port on any given day; thus, the total number of Americans at the base varies dramatically depending on the size of the crews. Approximately 6,000 Americans go from Subic each day into Olongapo — the community around the base — to spend over \$1 million a week on entertainment.

Olongapo was once a small fishing village, but now supports a population of 280,000, many of whom arrived during the boom years of the Vietnam war. Officially, there are 6,000 hostesses in the town working in an estimated 500 clubs, bars, hotels, restaurants, sauna baths, and massage parlors. Opinions differ on the number of unregistered prostitutes, ranging from a conservative 30% of the official figure all the way up to 150% of that figure. In any case, the

numbers vary with the size of the crews in port. In the past, the arrival of an aircraft carrier has brought an influx of up to an estimated 16,000 "hospitality girls" from outside the city.

"Buntag", a newsletter produced by two drop-in centers for prostitutes in Manila in conjunction with The Gabriela Network on Violence Against Women, reports on the circumstances of the women who work the bars. The women come to Olongapo from many different places in the Philippines, but the greatest number are from those regions with high poverty and constant civil unrest, particularly the Visayas. The women themselves say that poverty, not the lights of the big city, constitutes the principal reason for their leaving the provinces. Many women who were originally headed for Manila with the hope of finding a job in a factory or as a maid, turned to prostitution when they were told they could make more money in the bars. (In 1980, a study conducted by the Bureau of Women and Minors revealed that an 18 year-old massage attendant earned four times the entry-level wage of a factory worker.) A portion of the little amount the women do earn goes back to their families both for food and to provide younger siblings with education. Some women use their income to support children they have left behind with relatives. However, women rarely tell their families how they have earned the money they send home.

In Olongapo, as in other cities in the Philippines, workers in the entertainment industry are required to register with the Mayor's Office in order to be licensed professionals. To retain their license to work, hospitality girls or hostesses must also be certified by the Department of Health by undergoing a bi-weekly test for sexually transmitted diseases. Hostesses in Olongapo might be considered fortunate; unlike those in the tourist districts of Ermita and Malate in Manila, they have a social hygiene center at their disposal, which is run by the city health department and receives equipment and medicines from the U.S. Navy. However, women must pay for these exams as well as a more expensive bi-annual check-up. Their clients, on the other hand, are not required to undergo any tests for venereal diseases.

Beyond Olongapo

The activities in Olongapo serve as one example of how prostitution grew to be an essential part of the tourist industry in the Philippines. Furthermore, the exploitation of women in Olongapo and elsewhere reveals the dubious foundations of the entire tourist-oriented program. Tourism was meant to foster not

only foreign exchange, but also to promote the growth of local industry. In her book, *Filipinas for Sale: An Alternative Philippine Report on Women and Tourism*, Pennie Azarcon de la Cruz, notes that many of the bars and clubs in which the women work are controlled by foreigners through Filipina wives or girlfriends. The owners and managers of the international hotels in which tourists stay are also foreigners. And the wines the tourists drink, the meat they eat, the red carpets they walk on are all imported from the countries from which they come. Thus, tourism not only uses poor women as inexpensive bait, but also

diverts the resources of a poor country from the development of its own communities.

In the Philippines, the prostitution of women is a visceral metaphor for the wider prostitution of the country as a whole. Renato Constantino, a noted Filipino historian explains, "Instead of attacking the core of economic problems in order to assure the valid earning of foreign exchange, tourism has opened the country to facilitate further begging." Prostitution, of the individual and the nation, will continue so long as the existing economic order enforces dependency. (DE)



BOOKS

Book Reviews

Doing a Feasibility Study: Training Activities for Starting or Reviewing a Small Business

edited by Suzanne Kindervatter,
OEF International/Publications,
1815 H Street, NW, 11th Floor,
Washington, DC 20006 USA. 1987
(US\$15)

reviewed by Candace Nelson

OEF's new publication, *Doing a Feasibility Study: Training Activities for Starting or Reviewing a Small Business*, is a welcome addition to a field that currently faces a dearth of good educational and training materials. The popularity of income generation as a development strategy for women has led to the emergence of many small business promotion programs around the globe in the last ten years. Unfortunately, as these programs are evaluated and documented, tales of ill-fated business efforts doomed by lack of analysis, poor planning, inappropriate training or mismanagement are rolling in.

Appropriate, skills-oriented training is an important element of improving the quality of income — generation programs and their chances for success. This training manual is one of a series of three, published under the title of "Appropriate Business Skills for Third World Women", which addresses a very real problem — the field workers who are trying to help poor people earn more money often have very little understanding of business practices and principles themselves, much less the ability to teach these to villagers. In many cases, this manual promises not only to educate the trainees, but the trainer/facilitator as well.

Doing a Feasibility Study introduces learners to all the steps of a simple feasibility study in the first section and

guides them through the process of actually carrying out a real study in the second. Each of the steps is illustrated by simple graphics which are repeated throughout the manual so that the reader begins to recognize the symbols attached to the various activities. The training exercises are, for the most part, action-oriented and participatory. Participants are sent out into the community to interview business-people, take pictures with Polaroid cameras, and collect information on cost and availability of the supplies they will need.

Although the manual states that one does not have to have previous business experience to facilitate this training program, it does assume a certain level of business knowledge for both trainers and participants. Experience with rural women in Africa has shown that basic concepts like profit, loss, interest, and capital investment must often be explained at the outset, using the same active learning techniques that are presented here. Facilitators should assess program participants' grasp of these before proceeding.

Similar to the problem of defining business terms, a frequently repeated recommendation accompanies the training exercises that rely on discussion, urging the trainer to suggest certain important points to the learners that they might not have thought of themselves. The trainer is not always provided with the complete list of things to "suggest" to the learners. In addition, this recommendation could lead to much of the information being "told" to the learners. With the unfamiliar and complex material of a business skills training, this way of imparting information may well be necessary, but stories and skits could then be used more frequently to reinforce the message and stimulate the learners' own analytical thinking.

Though OEF claims otherwise, these training exercises require literacy and numeracy skills of a majority of the learners. Clearly, symbols can be substituted for written headings and other words, but this requires an agile, confi-

dent trainer who is willing to put in extra hours developing and testing these visual materials. The manual does not adequately prepare the trainer for work with illiterates.

One potential flaw in the manual is that participants are directed to simply list their ideas in a brainstorming exercise when choosing a business to study. This overlooks the fact that women tend to select a business based on those that are familiar to them either from their household or their communities. As OEF recognizes, good training should start with what learners already know; however, business training, especially for women, demands that learners move on from the comfortable to the new and unknown. Otherwise, there is a danger that women will choose to produce what they have always produced or what their neighbor is producing. The manual does not guide learners to first assess which products and services are already available in the community and how they could find that undiscovered market niche they might fill or a new way to use a commonly available resource.

These cautionary notes can easily be addressed by trainers who adapt the *Doing a Feasibility Study* program to fit



Book Reviews

THE SIX STEPS FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY



1 CHOOSE A PRODUCT OR SERVICE TO SELL



2 FIND OUT IF PEOPLE WILL BUY THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE



3 DETERMINE HOW THE BUSINESS WILL OPERATE



4 CALCULATE BUSINESS EXPENSES



5 ESTIMATE SALES INCOME



6 DECIDE: IS THE BUSINESS A GOOD IDEA?

their own needs. That this is possible means the manual will be widely used by those eager to help stimulate entrepreneurship. However, trainers should keep two aspects in mind as they adapt exercises and activities. The training manual outlines a program that could take up to three months to complete and is only one of a series of three manuals. This highlights the length of time required to carry out an adequate business training program. In contrast to credit programs that involve little or no training, this participatory approach could be very expensive. We need to document the effectiveness of this kind of training in order to prove that the effort merits the cost.

Documenting the impact of business training can be problematic because training alone does not ensure successful business operations. The program presented here is based on basic western business operating procedures. In reality, community groups in rural areas of the third world often establish and run their businesses according to differing cultural practices which, in many cases, have proven incompatible with the capitalist logic of profit. For this reason, one should use pre-designed training programs with caution. Trainers would do well to gather information about the informal systems at work in their communities and ensure that the training program they use takes this information into account. Fortunately, the OEF manual does provide the trainer

with a foundation of well-designed exercises from which to work.

We must not be naive about the path to successful income generation programs. Most of the barriers new entrepreneurs face, such as lack of infrastructure, variability of supply, and competing demands on time, have little to do with project design or quality of training. This manual is a welcome addition to the field, but not a simple solution to those failures development practitioners working in small-scale enterprise promotion have been telling us about.

Candace Nelson is a Program Officer at World Education.

Rural Women and State Policy: Feminist Perspectives on Latin American Development

edited by Carmen Diana Deere and Magdalena Leon, Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder CO 80301 USA. 1987 (US\$38)

reviewed by Elizabeth Dore

Rural Women and State Policy: Feminist Perspectives on Latin Ameri-

can Development is an important book about how alternative models of economic development and state policy have affected the lives of rural women in Latin America. It should be of great interest to development practitioners, academic specialists and social activists. The essays in the book effectively integrate practical approaches to the issues of women in development with more theoretical analyses of the interrelationship between class and gender in the process of feminist social transformation.

The introduction to the volume, written by the editors Carmen Diana Deere and Magdalena Leon, provides a valuable review of the accomplishments of the United Nations Decade for Women that ended in 1985. It argues that the principle achievements of the UN Decade were in the field of research. In the course of the Decade many myths about rural women were challenged, as social scientists and feminist activists questioned accepted orthodoxy concerning the marginalization of rural women from agricultural production. Deere and Leon provide a useful analysis of the conclusions of recent research on rural women's roles in household and social production and reproduction.

Deere and Leon underscore the economic context of the celebratory decade. The Decade for Women coincided with the most severe economic crisis ever experienced in Latin America. The articles that follow are case studies of how different models of economic development have affected rural women. Many of these essays — written by widely recognized scholars — concentrate on the impact of the economic crisis on the subordination of the rural poor, and of women in particular. Each presents a strong analysis of the effect of government policy on rural women.

The case studies are followed by four comparative analyses that concentrate on policy issues: agrarian reform, income generating development initiatives, the integrated rural development approach and migration. These articles raise important conceptual issues and develop the practical implications of the analyses. Carmen Diana Deere in her article, "The Latin American Agrarian Reform Experience", argues that "processes of socioeconomic change are not gender neutral" (p. 186). However, most agrarian reform programs in Latin America were based on the assumption that they are, and that all members of beneficiary households would benefit equally from the reforms. Deere demonstrates that most reform processes negatively affected rural women, who were

Book Reviews

denied access to resources. As a result, women's control over farm income diminished and with this, so did their social position.

Deere argues, convincingly, that only in Nicaragua and Cuba, where one objective of state policy is to promote women's participation in agriculture, have the agrarian reform experiments systematically incorporated women into the reform processes. Nevertheless, even in these countries rural women are concentrated in sectors that pay low wages and require minimal skill. The editors suggest that "positive state policy and an ideology of equality are necessary but not sufficient conditions to ensure women's incorporation into social production on the same terms as men" (p. 12).

Cornelia Butler Flora addresses a particularly topical theme in her article "Income — Generation Projects for Rural Women". Flora ascribes the current vogue in development agencies for income generating projects to the ideological compatibility of such projects with the free market economic prescriptions presently emanating from the White House, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and USAID. The popularity of income generating projects is not attributable to their success. Numerous evaluations have demonstrated that these projects frequently impoverish project beneficiaries rather than expand their economic opportunities. Flora argues that in the current crisis governments are unable and unwilling to finance more ambitious and "more heroic" development projects that benefit the poor. Therefore, governments and development agencies, confronted by rapidly deteriorating economic conditions, are shifting the onus for economic improvement from the state to the poor. Nevertheless, Flora concludes that income generating projects targeting poor women can have merits, in so far as they underscore the importance of women as producers and promote autonomous organizations of women.

The articles in *Rural Women and State Policy* share a common perspective. They argue that the model of development and the corresponding macroeconomic state policies are the most important variables affecting the lives of poor women in Latin America. As a body they critique "developmentalism" and "its assumption that social change and, hence, state intervention are neutral with respect to gender and class" (p. 261). They question models of growth that reproduce absolute and rel-

ative inequality and suggest that such models preclude the possibility of achieving social and economic equality for all women (and men).

The book concludes with a brief but suggestive analysis of how rural women become mobilized to struggle to expand their social and economic participation in society, and of what kinds of development interventions promote this process. Deere and Leon argue that sustained improvements in the lives of poor women depend upon women developing a consciousness of the conditions that reproduce their subordination. Consciousness empowers poor women and engenders commitment to build autonomous organizations that can articulate their demands. The articles in this book suggest that the situation of poor rural women will not change significantly until their autonomous organizations become effective political forces in society.

Elizabeth Dore is Assistant Professor of Latin American history at Middlebury College. She worked on the staff of the Inter-American Foundation and has served as consultant to many international development agencies.

Hopeful Openings

by Sally W. Yudelman, Kumarian Press, 630 Oakwood Ave., Suite 119, West Hartford CT 06110 USA. 1987 (US\$14.95)

reviewed by Kathy McAfee

Sally Yudelman's painstaking and sympathetic study of five women's development organizations in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean is an example of clearly-focused yet holistic analysis rarely found in development project evaluations. Yudelma avoids the extremes both of narrow economism—that measures success in terms of numbers of loans repaid or chickens raised—and of sterile debate over abstractions such as "integration" versus "separatism".

Instead, she asks of each organization: who are these women? How do they themselves perceive their problems and successes? What exactly do their organizations do? In what context—cultural, political, and economic—do they do it? The answers

she gleans contain valuable kernels of learning for women's organizations everywhere.

Sadly, however, Yudelma stops short of posing a far more important question: do these organizations, or the models they represent, actually or potentially advance the status of poor women, or of third world women in general? Given that the focus of the organizations studied is, in Yudelma's words, "the economic emancipation of women", it should not be too much to ask whether they are making progress in that direction.

For each country studied, Yudelma mentions systemic constraints that block economic improvements for women and the poor majorities of the population: landlessness and elite opposition to land reform in Honduras and the Dominican Republic, exploitative relations between factory owners and their employees in Mexico and Costa Rica, soaring unemployment nearly everywhere, machismo, attitudes and institutions which ignore the value and scope of women's labor, and the economic crisis which, Yudelma notes, "broke out" in 1980.

Yudelma is aware that women's organizations have arisen in the third world in response to the fact that "the state has been unwilling or unable to provide needed services". However, she fails to acknowledge that this cut-back of services stems largely from structural adjustment measures forced upon third world governments in an attempt to keep up the centuries-old flow of resources from the South to the North.

Although she never explains the nature or the origins of the economic crisis, Yudelma describes some of its devastating consequences. Yudelma examines a prominent women's organization in each of the five countries she has chosen to focus on, analyzing and linking their failures to the prevailing economic climate. In Mexico, for example, co-operatives formed by the *Centro de Orientación de la Mujer Obrera* (COMO) for unemployed factory workers failed because of global recession and economic austerity policies. Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, the gains of *Mujeres en Desarrollo Dominicana* (MUDE), have been limited partly because of MUDE's dependency on government subsidies which were cut by 75% as a result of structural adjustment policies. Yudelma gives similar examples for Costa Rica and Honduras.

Although Yudelma gives well-deserved praise to the Women and

Book Reviews

Development Unit of the University of the West Indies (WAND) for promoting women's leadership and organizing skills and awareness of gender as a development issue in the English-speaking Caribbean, she fails to note what WAND itself is quick to point out: that despite the creation of Women's Bureaus in nine Caribbean governments, the majority of women in the Caribbean and in the third world as a whole are worse off than they were 15 years ago.

Yudelman, I suspect, is not only aware that this is true, but would acknowledge that enormous changes in economic and political structures are needed to reverse the trend toward worsening poverty for the majority of women in the world. Yet she does not pose the question of how such changes, or even small steps towards them, can be made. Instead, after passing reference to the economic and social context in which each organization functions, she quickly narrows her focus from the broader economic and political perspective to an assessment of the organization's ability to succeed and grow *as a project*.

A narrowing of vision

Such a narrowing of vision is one of the most dangerous occupational hazards in the development industry. Both donor and recipient organizations have vested interests in demonstrating the success of the projects they undertake or fund. These interests often lead them to ignore fundamental questions about local and international power relationships and resource flows which would reveal the limitations of "development by projects", and that have the potential to precipitate conflict with governments, local elites, or donors upon which project continuity and agency growth depend.

Yudelman states that in general, the women's organizations have been successful in providing services, and sometimes partially successful in promoting income generating projects when technical assistance and credit are also offered. She acknowledges that successful service provision depends upon continuous infusion of resources from foreign donors, but does not explore the consequences of this dependency nor ask how it might be overcome. (However, her "Note to Donors" is well-aimed. She chides aid agencies for failing to communicate among themselves, for placing unrealistic demands on funding recipients to achieve self-sufficiency, for following development fads, and for

scrimping on funds for staff training and evaluation.)

Yudelman praises all five women's organizations for success in providing women with new occupational and managerial skills. Yet she does not confront the fact—of which the book is replete with examples—that the control by national elites and foreign corporations over markets and capital make it increasingly difficult for women (and men) to exchange their newly-acquired skills for adequate incomes.

Yudelman cites the success of organizational leaders in gaining access to local and international resources (i.e., grants) and in helping women to "make the 'system' work for them and take advantage of opportunities and openings within their societies to benefit poor women". She does not ask what it would take to create significant *new* openings and opportunities, nor does she study the extent to which project successes may merely redistribute pieces of a shrinking pie.

Yudelman stresses the importance for success of ties to governments and powerful social groups. She does not explore the constraints that must accompany such a cozy relationship with local elites. She does encourage women's organizations to get involved in political lobbying for policy changes, taking care not to provoke "hostile" reactions from those in control. Yet elsewhere in the text she admits that policy changes made thus far in response to such lobbying are typically not implemented.

All five organizations studied experienced some similar internal problems as well as external constraints. Yudelman's account is most helpful in describing the toll taken on under-funded, overextended organizational staff, attempting to satisfy the numerous and ever-changing requirements of their funding sources, "expected to achieve their goals with small projects and without raising hard questions about equal access to resources," while all the time working a typical woman's "double day".

As success in providing services raises the hopes of poor women, demands on organizations quickly increase beyond the ability of staff and volunteers to meet them. Yudelman therefore urges women's organizations to limit their organizational goals. She stresses that women are in the habit of taking on several roles at once, but by extending themselves beyond their professional mandates and taking on "community activities as distinct from productive or income generating pro-

jects" for example, organizations overload themselves and cease to perform their principal functions effectively. Women's organizations need to recognize that community services that would lighten women's workloads such as accessible water, electricity, schools and health clinics, demand basic changes in the structure of the society. They are not an extension of an organization's professional responsibilities.

Thus, without realizing it, Yudelman puts her finger on the futility of hoping that organizations based on income generation and service provision and dependent on foreign donors can lead to the "economic emancipation of women" in colonized economies. At best they can "succeed" by making a conscious decision to assist only a small minority of poor women.

Equally important, Yudelman's view of women's complex role in spanning the productive and reproductive spheres of economic and social life as a *negative factor* causes her to overlook the very reason why organized women have the greatest potential of any single constituency for creating new social structures that transcend subservient market-determined criteria of "success" and the separation of valued, remunerated work from family and community resources and needs.

For this to happen, women need to become empowered in the fullest sense of the word. Possibly the most important and potentially far-reaching effect of women's organizing is one which Yudelman notes but, I believe, underestimates: the process of consciousness-raising, "awareness of gender status", and confidence-building that takes place when women break loose from patriarchal traditions in order to work together. The empowering and energizing effect of this experience helps explain why women often continue to meet and pursue projects that, in strictly economic terms, appear to be "failing".

Yudelman is a sincere and compassionate advocate of autonomous women's organizations. All of us who agree with the importance of this goal, owe her and the organizations she describes some help in strengthening the case for channeling resources directly to poor women by daring to ask the larger and more dangerous questions Yudelman fails to pose.

Kathy McAfee is a researcher and writer in Oxfam America's Outreach Department. She has recently done research on the international debt crisis.

From the Field

Field Report

LETTER FROM THE FIELD:
*Amilagama,
Sri Lanka*



The women of Amilagama, a remote village in Sri Lanka, had gathered in the village temple to meet with us. They were discussing a number of possible income generation activities, and I had come, along with three colleagues, from the Institute for Workers' Education at the University of Colombo to help the women assess their plans.

The women had long ago realized that if they were to improve their lives, they would have to do so on their own. Although Amilagama was included in a government settlement program eight years ago, the villagers received little attention from development planners. The women talked about the problems they had to overcome: the rough terrain surrounding the village made access difficult and erosion limited their ability to grow crops. They were poor and the village had few resources.

Malima, a mother of two small children, complained of how difficult it was to make ends meet on the small income earned by her husband who worked as a casual laborer. She and some of the other women had heard that growing fodder for sale to dairy farmers could be profitable, as well as selling dairy products to other villages in the area. However, as mothers of young children, all were overwhelmed by the demands placed on their time by household responsibilities and subsistence farming.

One event in particular had made their burden all the greater. The village pre-school had recently closed, and with it went the time they could have spared to pursue other activities. The pre-school had been housed in the village community center, and the keys to the center were being held by a village councilman who did not want to relinquish his responsibility for the building. Although they were angry and could not see the reason for his decision to close the school, the women had accepted the council member's seniority and authority on the matter.

During discussions with the women it became clear that the key to finding a profitable group economic activity lay with the women themselves. First, they needed to find some way to make time for their activities, and then they needed to take advantage of local resources that were readily available, rather than searching for ways of gaining income that depended on factors they could not control. For example, Malima and her friends had not thought about how they would market their dairy products beyond the village, as transportation was both difficult and expensive.

When we suggested that they start with the pre-school, it was apparent that they had never considered ways of circumventing the village council member, who had put his own prestige above the needs of his community. The more they discussed the matter, the more they realized how important it was for them as a group to have access to the school. The village pre-school could not only provide the time away from their children which the women needed, but it also offered a viable means of earning extra income. For a small fee they could make their day-care operations available to other villagers.

Some constraints to development might be considered self-imposed. Until the women organized themselves, they could not see how similar their needs were and how much power they held when they worked together. It was not so much resources and technical assistance they lacked, but the ability to trust their own judgement and to imagine beyond the accepted forms development takes when it is handed down from the planner's drafting table (i.e. Malima's notion of dairy farming). For the women in Amilagama, the first step to independence and greater prosperity would be unlocking the door of the community center. When we left, we agreed not to meet in the temple on our next visit but in the village pre-school.

Jaya Gajanayake is a consultant on the Women Farmers Education Project, which is coordinated by the Institute for Workers' Education at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Where to Get Further Information on Gender Issues in Development...

Resource Centers

Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), B.P. 11007, CD Annexe, Dakar, Senegal. AAWORD was founded by a group of African women researchers who felt a need to coordinate their research, share experiences and discuss priorities. AAWORD stresses the importance of research carried out by Africans themselves and makes a conscious effort to relate theoretical issues to women's practical problems and needs. AAWORD serves as a clearinghouse for information on women's groups throughout Africa. It has organized or participated in the organization of numerous conferences and seminars on women and development.

Centre for Women's Development Studies, B43, Panachsheel Enclave, New Delhi 110107, India. The center seeks to "promote, develop and disseminate the knowledge regarding the evolution of women's roles in society". The center enhances women's participation in the development process through the organization of workshops, training and consultancy services and research. It maintains a library and a publications and information service.

Centro de Estudios de la Mujer, Olleras 2554, Buenos Aires 1426, Argentina. This women's studies center aims at increasing Latin American women's awareness of their place in society. It conducts research on topics such as women and health, women and education, and women and communications. The center promotes an interdisciplinary exchange on women's issues, maintains an extensive library of documents related to women and development and organizes courses and meetings on women.

Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristan, Parque Hernan Velarde 42, Lima 1, Peru. The Center's activities are organized into four programs: a legal service for women; a training program for individuals and promoters of social and development projects; a consulting

service available to public and private institutions dealing with women's issues; and an information, publication and library service.

International Women's Tribune Center, (IWTC), 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. IWTC maintains an extensive resource center, and produces as well as distributes a number of publications, audiovisual materials and other materials especially designed for women involved in development projects. *The Tribune: Women and Development Quarterly* is the IWTC's "main vehicle for communicating with and about women's projects throughout the developing world". Each issue synthesizes current information and research relevant to a specific women and development theme and contains names and addresses of women's groups working in that particular subject area. Available in English, French and Spanish, 4 issues/year. (US\$8 in the US and Canada; US\$10 in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan; free to women and groups in the developing world)

ISIS—Women's International Information and Communication Service, ISIS (Italy) Via Santa Maria dell'Anima 30, 00186 Rome, Italy; ISIS (Switzerland) P.O. Box 50, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland; ISIS (Latin America) P.O. Box 2067, Correo Central, Santiago, Chile. ISIS is "an international information and communication service by and for women". It draws on a network of over ten thousand contacts in 150 countries and a resource center with thousands of documents and publications related to women's issues. ISIS also coordinates the International Feminist Network, and provides technical assistance and training in women's communication, information management, publishing and research. *ISIS International Women's Journal*, is the organization's quarterly publication. For each issue, ISIS works with a particular women's group from a third world country. Available in English and Spanish, 4 issues/year. (US\$25)

Resource Guides

Centros de Mujeres, Espacios de Mujeres. IWTC and Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristan (1986). A guide on women's centers in Latin America in Spanish. Available from International Women's Tribune Center, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017. (US\$8)

Information Kit for Machineries on The Integration of Women in Development in Africa. African Training and Research Centre for Women, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Available from ECA/ATRCW, PO Box 3001, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Women in the Third World: A Directory of Resources. Thomas Fenton and Mary Heffron (Orbis Books, 1987). Available from Third World Resources, 464 19th St., Oakland CA 94612. (US\$9.95, plus \$1.50 handling)

Women in Development: A Resource Guide for Organization and Action. ISIS (1984). Available from New Society Publishers, 4722 Baltimore Ave., Philadelphia PA 19143. (US\$14.95)

World Education

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